

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A multifunction machine/server system comprising:
a server connected to a network; and
a plurality of multifunction machines connected to
5 the network,

each of said plurality of multifunction
machines, comprising:

a first-kind-of-process unit for transferring,
when requested for a first kind of process, an electronic
10 document needed for executing the first kind of process to
said server via the network, and requesting said server to
execute the first kind of process with respect to the
electronic document; and

a second-kind-of-process unit for solely
15 executing, when requested for a second kind of process,
the second kind of process without linkage with said
server,

wherein said server has a function of executing the
first kind of processes that said plurality of
20 multifunction machines request said server to execute.

2. A multifunction machine so used as to be connected
via a network to a server, comprising:

scanner means for generating image data of a
25 document;

first-kind-of-process executing means for executing
an operation in linkage with said server, which utilizes
the image data generated by said scanner means;

second-kind-of-process executing means for executing a second kind of process requiring no operation in linkage with said server, which utilizes the image data generated by said scanner means;

5 designating means for designating said first- or second-kind-of-process executing means;

 execution control means for making, when said designating means designates the first- or second kind of process, said scanner means generate the image data, and
10 making said first- or second-kind-of-process executing means execute the first or second kind of process using the image data;

 state judging means for judging whether or not the first kind of process is in such a state as to be possible
15 of linking with said server; and

 designation control means for controlling, when said state judging means judges that the first kind of process is not in such a state as to be possible of linking with said server, said designating means so that said
20 designating means is unable to designate the first kind of process.

3. A multifunction machine according to claim 2, wherein said state judging means, when said multifunction
25 machine is started up, and when a first predetermined time elapses since said state judging means makes a judgement of not being in an operable state in linkage with said server, transmits a request for establishing a connection

to said server,

5 said state judging means, when said server transmits
a completion-of-assignment notification indicating that
the linkage operation becomes possible in response to the
connection establishing request, makes a judgement of
being in the operable state in linkage with said server,
and

10 said state judging means, when said server does not
yet transmits the completion-of-assignment notification,
or when a second predetermined time elapses since a latest
connection establishing request has been transmitted to
said server, makes the judgement of not being in the
operable state in linkage with said server.

15 4. A multifunction machine according to claim 3,
wherein the completion-of-assignment notification contains
information on a function executable by said server,

20 said state judging means recognizes the first kind of
process to which said server can correspond on the basis
of the completion-of-assignment notification, and

25 said designation judging means, when said state
judging means makes the judgement of being in the operable
state in linkage with said server, controls said
designating means to inhibit, within the first kind of
process, a designation of a process excluding the process
to which said server, it is recognized by said state
judging means, can correspond.

5. A multifunction machine according to any one of claims 2 to 4, further comprising:

operation mode information recording means for recording operation mode information indicating whether or not said first-kind-of-process executing means is utilized,

wherein said state judging means, when said operation mode information recording means is recorded with the operation mode information indicating that said first-kind-of-process executing means is not utilized, makes the judgement of not being in the operable state in linkage with said server without trying to communicate with said server.

6. A multifunction machine according to any one of claims 2 to 5, wherein said execution control means, when a plurality of processed are designated by said designating means, makes said scanner means generate the image data, and controls said first- or second-kind-of-process executing means to execute the plurality of processes designated by use of the image data in common.

7. A multifunction machine according to claims 2, 3 or 4, wherein the first kind of process executed by said first-kind-of-process executing means contains a process of requesting said server to fax the image data generated by said scanner means.

5 8. A multifunction machine according to any one of claims 2 to 7, wherein the first kind of process executed by said first-kind-of-process executing means contains a process of requesting said server to register the image data generated by said scanner means.

10 9. A multifunction machine according to any one of claims 2 to 7, wherein the second kind of process executed by said second-kind-of-process executing means contains a process of requesting a node connected to the network to print the image data generated by said scanner means.

15 10. A multifunction machine according to any one of claims 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 or 9, further comprising:
utilizing situation monitoring means for monitoring a situation of how each of said first- and second-kind-of-process executing means is utilized;
utilizing situation information recording means recorded with utilizing situation information defined as a
20 monitored result of said utilizing situation monitoring means; and
utilizing situation information transmitting means for transmitting to said server the utilizing situation information recorded in said utilizing situation
25 information recording means.

11. A multifunction machine according to claim 10, wherein said utilizing situation information recording

means is non-volatile recording means, and includes:

5 destruction detecting means for detecting a
destruction of the utilizing situation information
recorded in said utilizing situation information recording
means; and

10 utilizing situation information managing means for,
when said destruction detecting means detects a
destruction of the utilizing situation information,
requesting said server to send the utilizing situation
information on said self multifunction machine, and making
said utilizing situation information recording means
recorded with the utilizing situation information received
as a response to the above request.

15 12. A multifunction machine according to any one of
claims 2 to 11, further comprising:

displaying means capable of displaying the image
data,

20 wherein said execution control means makes, before
causing said first- or second-kind-of-process executing
means to execute the first or second kind of process, said
displaying means display the image data generated by said
scanner means, and makes, only when indicated to continue
the process, said first- or second-kind-of-process
25 executing means execute the designated first or second
kind of process which uses the image data.

13. A multifunction machine according to any one of

claims 2 to 12, wherein said designating means is constructed of a touch panel having a function of displaying an image and a function of outputting positional information on a touch position, and

5 said designation control means controls said designating means to display an image through which a designation-inhibited process can not be designated from the first or second kind of process.

10 14. A server used by its being connected via a network to a plurality of multifunction machines, comprising:

15 a plurality of request processing means for processing requests received from said plurality of multifunction machines via the network, said request processing means assigning, when receiving the request from said multifunction machine, said multifunction machine having transmitted the request to said request processing means itself;

20 assigning means for sending to said multifunction machine a completion-of-assignment notification indicating that an operation in linkage via the network becomes possible; and

25 assignment canceling means for canceling, when the request is not received from said assigned multifunction machine even after a predetermined has elapsed, the assignment of said multifunction machine by said request processing means.

15. A server according to claim 14, wherein said
assigning means includes means for sending to said
multifunction machine the completion-of-assignment
notification containing information on processes
executable by said server.

16. A server according to claim 14 or 15, further
comprising:

means, for faxing the image data, having a function
of faxing, when given a request for a FAX transmission
from said multifunction machine assigned by said request
processing means, the image data received from said
multifunction machine.

17. A server according to any one of claims 14 to 16,
further comprising:

means, for recording plural pieces of image data,
having a function of recording, when said multifunction
requests said request processing means to register the
image data, the image data received from said
multifunction machine.

18. A server according to any one of claims 14 to 16,
further comprising:

recording means for recording the utilizing situation
information received from said plurality of multifunction
machines; and

utilizing situation information transmitting means

for transmitting, when any one of nodes makes a request for transmitting the utilizing situation information, the utilizing situation information back to said node having transmitted the transmission request.

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19. A server according to any one of claim 18, further comprising:

utilizing situation information periodic transmitting means for transmitting the utilizing situation information in accordance with a predetermined schedule even when there is no transmission request from said node.

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20. A server according to claims 18 and 19, wherein said utilizing situation information recording means has non-volatile recording means, and further includes:

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destruction detecting means for detecting a destruction of the information recorded in said utilizing situation information recording means; and

utilizing situation information managing means for, when detecting the destruction of the information, requesting each of said multifunction machines to transmit the utilizing situation information, and again recording said utilizing situation information recording means with the utilizing situation information of said each multifunction machine which is received as a response to the above request.

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21. A program recording medium recorded with a

program, usable in a computer capable of communicating with other apparatuses via a network, for making said computer function as a server, said program comprising:

5 a request processing step of processing requests received from a plurality of multifunction machines via the network, and assigning, when receiving the request from any one of said multifunction machines, said multifunction machine having transmitted the request;

10 a step of sending to said multifunction machine a completion-of-assignment notification indicating that an operation in linkage via the network becomes possible; and

15 a step of canceling, when the request is not received from said assigned multifunction machine even after a predetermined has elapsed, the assignment of said multifunction machine in said request processing step.

22. A multifunction machine comprising:

a scanner unit for generating image data by scanning an image;

20 a printer unit for printing the image data;

a communications control unit for transmitting the image data onto a network;

a line control unit for transmitting the image data onto a public line;

25 a main control unit for controlling said scanner unit, said printer unit, said communications control unit and said line control unit in order to actualize a scanner function of sending the image data generated by said

scanner unit onto the network for saving the image data, a
copy function of transmitting the image data to said
printer unit and executing the printing of the image data,
a print function of sending the image data onto the
5 network, and a FAX function of sending the image data onto
the public line;

an operation unit for performing an operation of
designating one or more arbitrary addressees among all
addressees to which the image data can be sent in advance
10 of the generation of the image data by said scanner unit;
and

an interlocking operation control unit for executing
scheduling so that the image data generated by said
scanner unit are distributed to all the addressees
15 designated by the operation of the said operation unit.

23. A multifunction machine according to claim 22,
further comprising:

a recording unit stored with the image data generated
20 by said scanner unit,

wherein said main control unit further includes
compression/extension processing means for executing a
compression process upon the image data, thus storing said
recording unit with the compressed image data, and
25 executing an extension process upon the compressed image
data by reading the same image data from said recording
unit.

24. A multifunction machine according to claim 22,
wherein said operation unit further includes designating
means for designating the number of prints, and

5 said interlocking operation control unit further
includes number-of-prints distributing means for
distributing to the addressees a total number of prints,
which is designated by said designating means.

10 25. A multifunction machine according to claim 24,
wherein said number-of-prints distributing means
distributes the designated total number of prints in
accordance with sorting capabilities of a plurality of
addressees.

15 26. A multifunction machine according to claim 24,
wherein said number-of-prints distributing means
distributes the designated total number of prints in
accordance with print processing capabilities of the
plurality of designated addressees.